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ABSTRACT

This is a profile of 2,578 freshmen students at Montgomery College (Maryland), fall 1971. Data are presented in the following areas: (1) academic potentials, including ACT scores and high school grades; (2) goals and aspirations; (3) student personnel needs in the areas of housing, transportation, financial welfare, special programs, and extracurricular activities; (4) influences and factors in choosing a college; and (5) demographic information. This study was intended to assist faculty and counselors in advising, counseling, and planning, in addition to determining unique characteristics of the local population. Some findings were: (1) while Montgomery College students scored consistently higher on ACT than other junior college students in the state, they received lower high school grades; (2) compared to the national average for college freshmen, Montgomery students tend less toward education and science in their proposed major; (3) almost 70% planned to earn a BA or higher; (4) local students expressed less interest in student government, debating, and group participation, and more interest in art and acting, than the average college student nationally; (5) finding employment was seen as a problem for 13% of the local students; (6) important factors in choosing the college were the special curriculum and location; and (7) family income was considerably higher than the national norm. (RN)

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MONTGOMERY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

PROFILE OF ENTERING FRESHMEN

FALL 1971

Based on the Results of
The American College Testing Program

Compiled by

Robert L. Gell, Director
Office of Institutional Research

Rockville, Maryland

August 1972

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

OCT 12 1972

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGE
INFORMATION

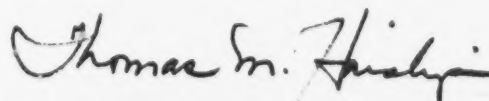
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INTRODUCTION

Each year more freshmen enter two-year institutions than enter four-year colleges and universities. For example, in Maryland last fall 12,565 freshmen entered the university and state colleges, while 18,663 entered the community colleges. In order to effectively assist these students as they begin their college experience and administer educational programs designed to meet student needs, college personnel must be knowledgeable in regard to the characteristics of the students.

This profile of the students who entered Montgomery Community College in the fall of 1971 has been compiled as a resource for faculty members. The profile gives an indication of the academic potential of the students which may be used by the faculty as they advise and counsel students and establish expected achievement levels and grading standards. Data concerning the non-academic activities and interests of students are provided for use by counselors and those responsible for planning student activities. Demographic and related information about Montgomery students is compared with national norms providing an indicator of the degree of uniqueness of the local population.

Every effort has been made to present this information in a useful and meaningful way; however, not all of the available data are reported. The entire ACT file is available upon request in the Office of Institutional Research.



Thomas M. Haislip
Dean of Student Affairs

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CHAPTER I

ACADEMIC POTENTIALS

The American College Testing Program (ACT) is an independent, nonprofit, educational service agency that collects, analyzes, processes, and reports information for use in educational planning by college-bound students and their parents, secondary school counselors, college administrators, and other educators. The major portion of the ACT battery consists of four tests - in English, mathematics, social studies, and natural sciences. These tests were developed to measure as directly as possible the abilities the student has that can be applied in his or her college work. In other words, the tests are designed to measure the student's ability to perform the kinds of intellectual tasks typically performed by college students. Most of the test items are concerned with what the student can do with what he has learned; they are not concerned primarily with specific and detailed subject matter.¹

The four ACT tests and four high school grades are useful in predicting academic achievement. Thus, the chief implication to be drawn from the tables in this chapter concerns the probable level of academic achievement.² The higher these scores, the higher the eventual academic achievement at Montgomery should be.³ While it

¹ _____, Using ACT on the Campus, (Iowa City, The American College Testing Program, 1970) p. 2.

² James Maxey, Your College Freshmen, (Iowa City: The American College Testing Program, 1971) p. 38.

³ The correlation of ACT scores, high school grades, and first semester GPA at Montgomery is .41.

is relatively easy to document these "input" variables, it is not easy to quantify other factors which influence student achievement such as instructor characteristics, facilities, instructional materials, special groupings of students, and teaching methods. These institutional variables may have as much to do with what a student learns as his academic potential reflected in grades and test scores. The trend in institutional research is towards more examination of institutional characteristics which tend to influence educational "outcomes." These factors studied in conjunction with student variables should allow educators to maximize the learning opportunities available at the College.

In this report the scores of 2308 native students and 270 foreign students who entered Montgomery Community College in the fall of 1971 are compared with the scores of all the students who entered the participating community colleges in Maryland. National norms are also presented for students who entered community and junior colleges across the country and for students who entered colleges and universities in general.

To provide for further comparison the native Montgomery students are divided into career-oriented and transfer-oriented groups according to their curriculum.

American College Test Scores

The English Usage Test is a 75-item, 40-minute test that measures the student's understanding and use of the basic elements in correct and effective writing: punctuation, capitalization, phraseology, style, and organization. The test stresses clear and accurate expression more than rote recall of rules of grammar. The format of the test is four prose passages with certain portions underlined and numbered. For each underlined portion four alternatives are given. The student must decide which alternative is most correct.

In Figure 1 the English scores of the Montgomery native and foreign student are compared to that of the Maryland freshman, the national community college freshman,⁴ and the average of all students entering colleges nationally.⁵ Out of a possible thirty-six points, twenty-one percent of the native students earned a score of twenty-one or more while only four percent of the foreign students did as well. Statewide, nineteen percent of the freshmen who entered participating community colleges earned a score of twenty-one or more. While Montgomery students generally tended to score better in English than did the average Maryland student they did not do as well as community college students did nationally.

⁴ _____, Class Profile Norms for National Community-Junior Colleges - Fall, 1970, (Iowa City: The American College Testing Program, 1971) pp. 1-7.

⁵ Maxey, op. cit. pp. 63-89.

Foreign students tend to score low on English language tests and those included in this report were no exception.

From Figure 2 it can be seen that transfer-oriented students tended to score higher on the English test than did career-oriented students. The latter group appears to be very near the Maryland average.

There appears to be a drop in the mean English score from last year. For example, the 1970 mean for Montgomery native students was 16.8 and this year it was 16.1. Foreign students suffered even a greater drop from 12.3 last year to 10.9 this year, or a total of 1.4 points. Maryland community college students lost .7 of a point from 16.0 to 15.3. A drop of this magnitude is not likely to be a result of chance.* However, there is not enough evidence to indicate a downward trend is in progress. At the same time it must be realized that as the College attracts an ever larger segment of the County's high school graduating class the mean of the College students will tend to equal the mean of the total high school population.

* t-test gives the probability of obtaining this difference by chance at less than one in a thousand.

Percent of Students with ACT English Scores in Selected Intervals

5

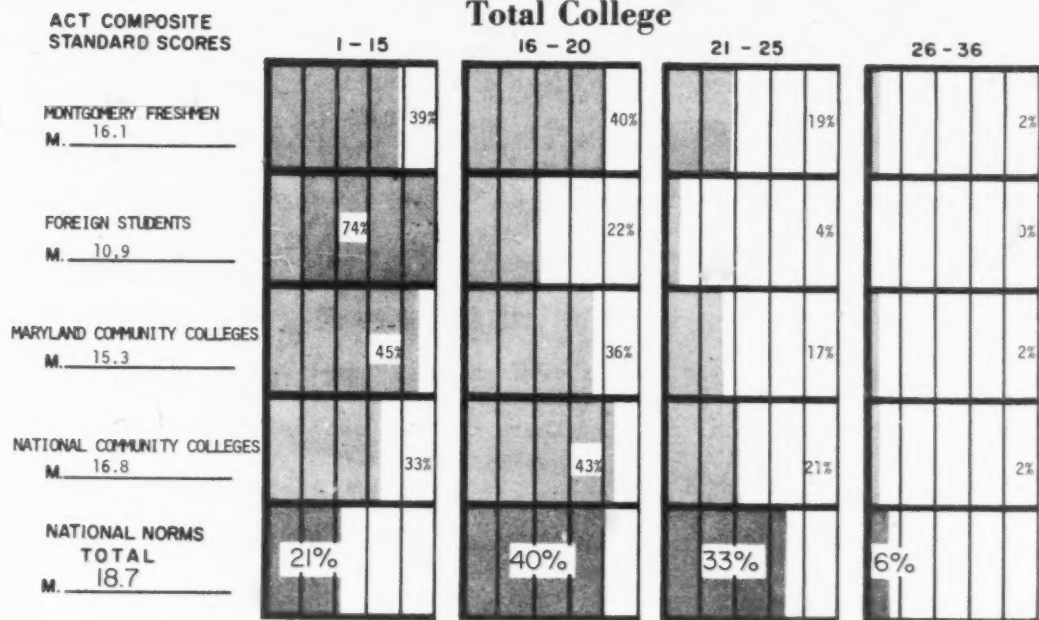


Figure 1

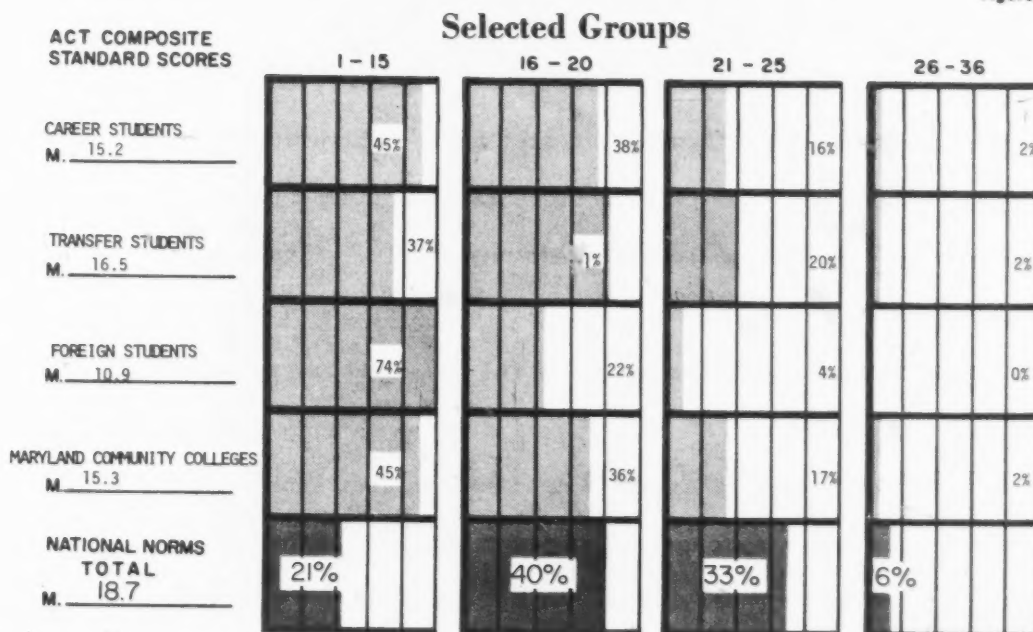


Figure 2



The Mathematics Usage Test is a 40-item, 50-minute examination that measures the student's mathematical reasoning ability. The test emphasizes the solution of practical quantitative problems that are encountered in many college curricula. It also includes a sampling of mathematical techniques covered in high school courses. It emphasizes reasoning in quantitative context rather than memorization of formulas, knowledge of techniques, or computational skill. There are two general types of items: the first, verbal problems, presents quantitative problems in practical situations; the second consists of formal exercises in arithmetic, algebra, and geometry. The format of the item is a question with five alternative answers, the last of which may be "Not given."

Foreign students matriculating at Montgomery tend to score higher on the mathematics test than do native students. Figure 3 shows that the foreign students also did better than the average two-year college student nationally. Figure 4 indicates that the average transfer-oriented freshman tended to score higher in mathematics than did the average career-oriented freshman.

Foreign students earned a mean mathematics score last year of 17.9 which does not differ from the 18.0 earned this year. However, the native students dropped from a mean score of 18.2 last year to 17.3 this year and state-wide students in Maryland dropped from 17.5 to 16.6, or .9 of a point. As with English it is too early to determine if this is a fluke or the result of increased enrollment.

Percent of Students with ACT Mathematics Scores
in Selected Intervals
Total College

7

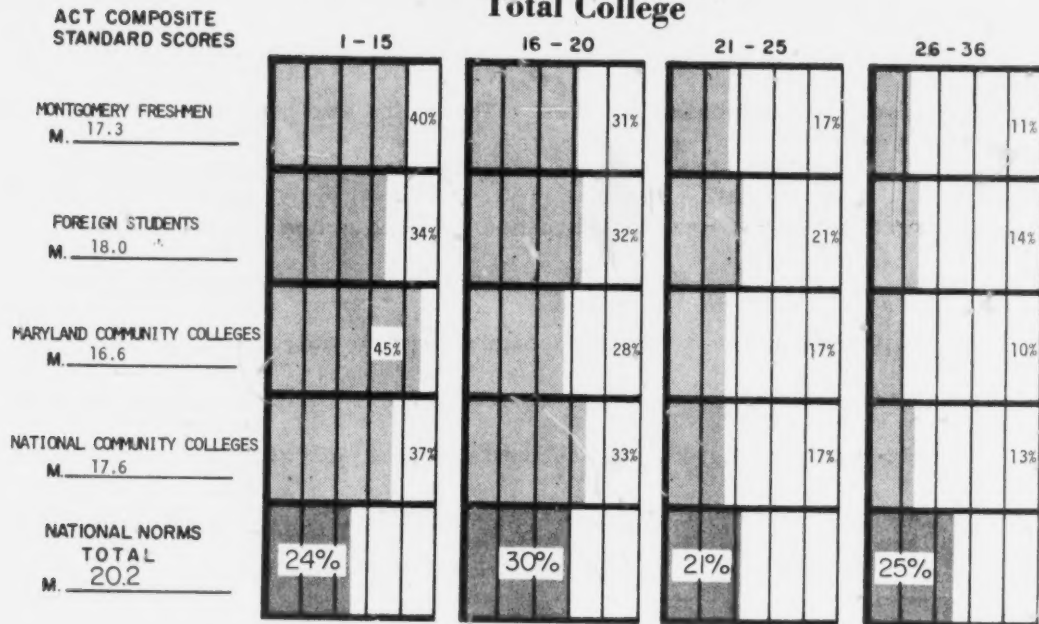


Figure 3

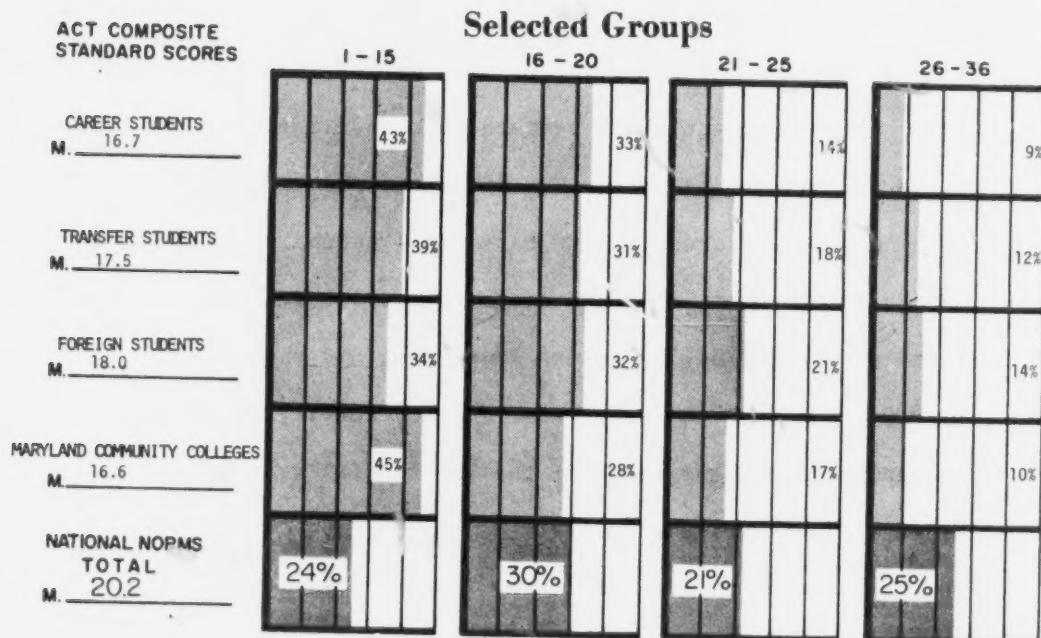


Figure 4



The Social Studies Reading Test is a 52-item, 35-minute test that measures the evaluative reasoning and problem-solving skills required in the social studies. There are two general types of items: the first is based on four reading passages, the second on general background or information obtained in high school social studies courses. All items are multiple-choice with four alternatives. Those based on the reading passages require more than reading comprehension skills; they require the student to draw inferences and conclusions, to extend the thoughts of the passages to new situations, to make deductions from experimental or graphic data, and to recognize a writer's bias, style, and mode of reasoning.

Figures 5 and 6 indicate that the Montgomery freshman scored higher than his counterpart at the other participating community colleges in Maryland but he failed to reach the national norm for two-year college students.

The lower mean score between 1970 and 1971 was most evident in the social studies area. The average social studies score for Montgomery native freshmen and Maryland freshmen dropped slightly more than one point. Foreign students who wrote the test in 1971 scored an average of 3.4 points lower than did those who wrote it in 1970. The fact that this test depends heavily on language comprehension may be the cause of the substantial drop in the scores earned by the foreign students.

Percent of Students with ACT Social Studies Scores in Selected Intervals Total College

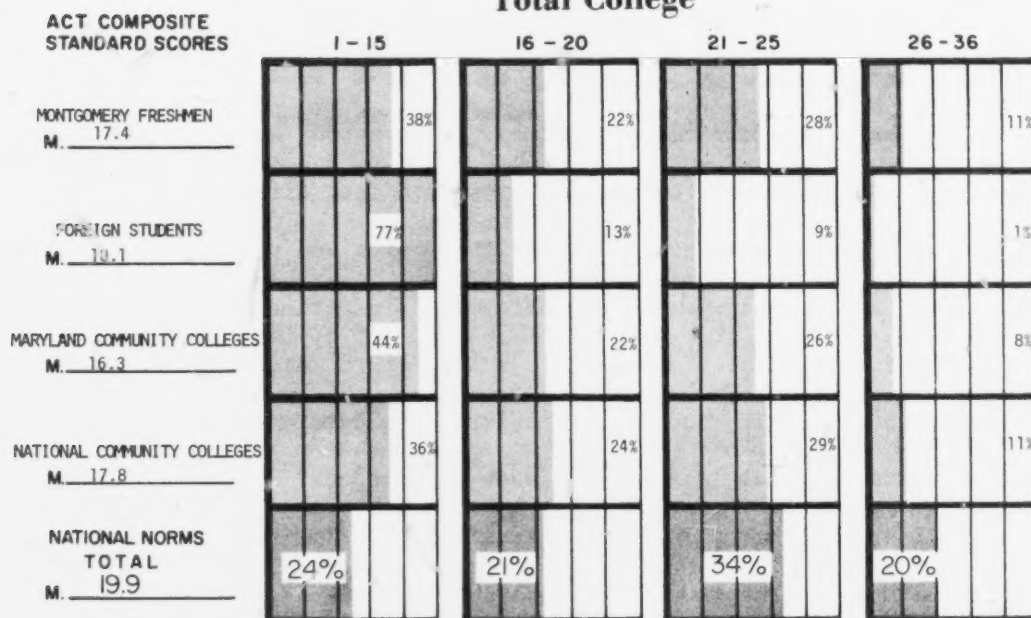


Figure 5

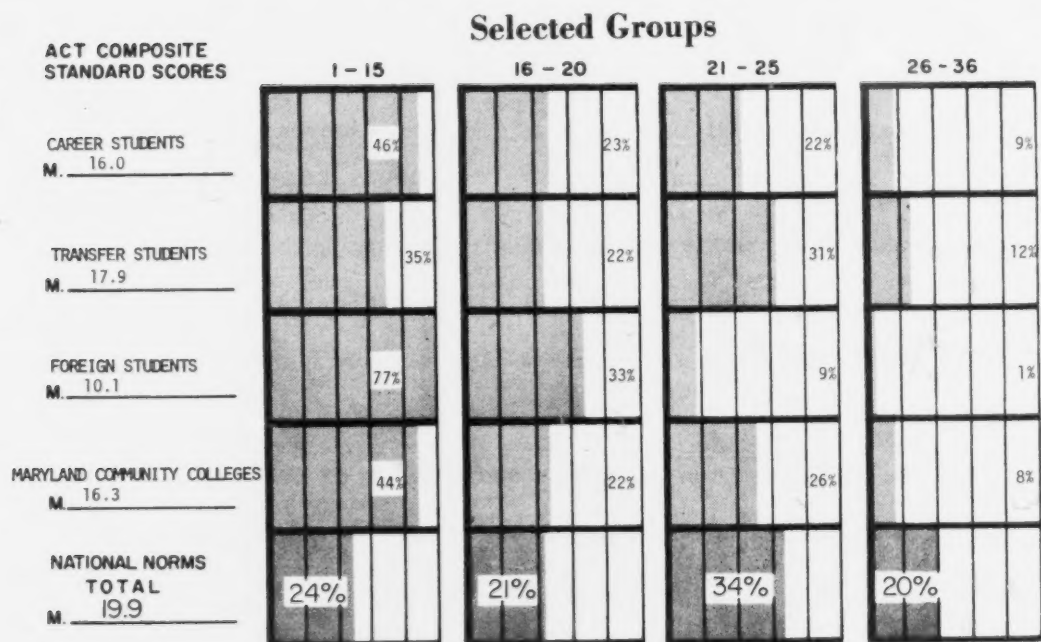


Figure 6



The Natural Sciences Reading Test is a 52-item, 35-minute test that measures the critical reasoning and problem-solving skills required in the natural sciences. There are two general types of items: the first is based on four reading passages, the second on information about science. All items are multiple-choice with four alternatives. The passages concern a variety of scientific topics and problems, with summaries of the procedures and the outcomes of experiments being perhaps the most common. The items require a student to interpret and evaluate scientific materials and, in particular, to understand the purposes of experiments, logical relations between experimental hypotheses, and generalizations that can be drawn from the experiments. The informational items ask the student to apply what he has learned in high school science courses to familiar, new, and analogous problems. Arithmetical computation and algebra are avoided.

The average score on this test made by college bound students nationally is twenty-one. At Montgomery thirty-five percent of the native freshmen scored this high as did twenty-seven percent of the two-year college students nationally. More Montgomery freshmen scored in the range from twenty-six to thirty-six than from twenty-one to twenty-five. (See Figures 7 and 8). This would indicate that Montgomery County High School graduates tend to have a good background in science.

The 1971 freshmen tended to score lower on their natural science test than did last year's group; however, the drop was less on this test than on any of the others in the battery.

Percent of Students with ACT Natural Sciences Scores in Selected Intervals

11

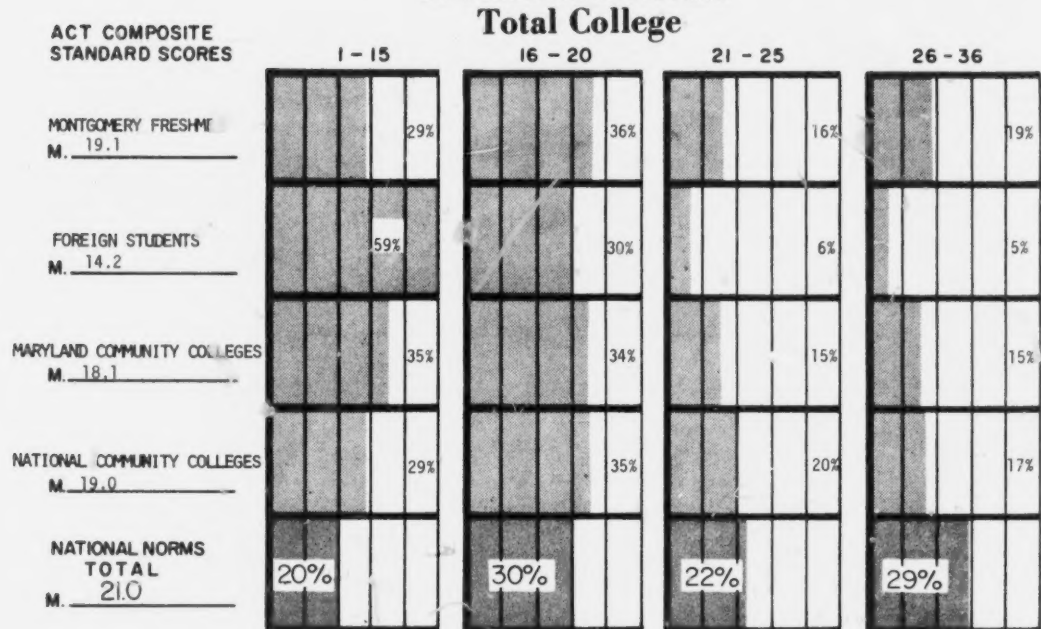


Figure 7

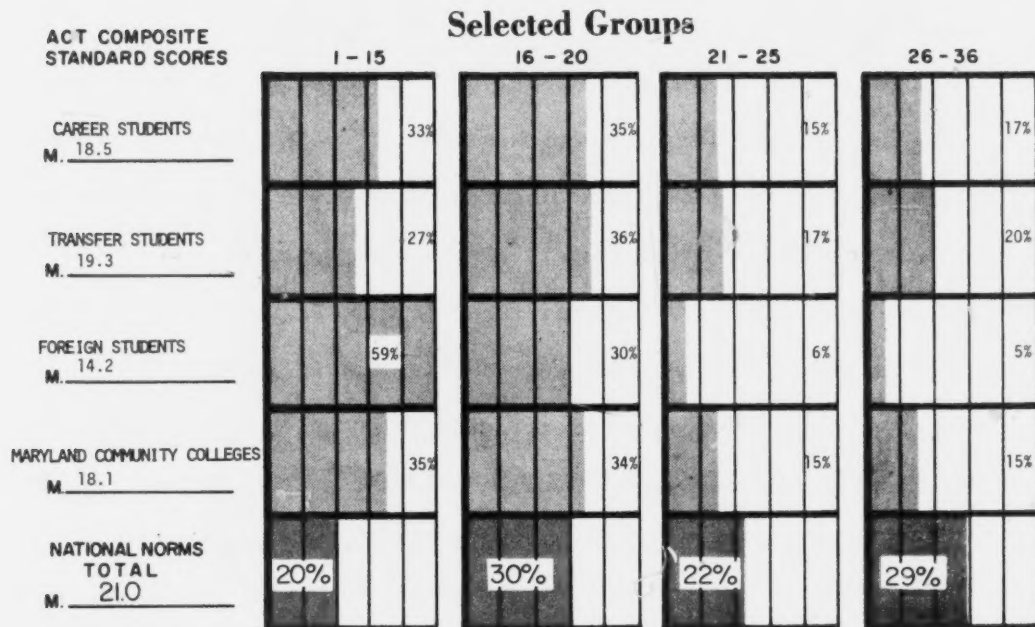


Figure 8



The Composite Score represents the average of the four test scores and makes it possible to compare the overall achievement of the student. Figures 9 and 10 reveal that overall the Montgomery native freshman tends to score higher than the average freshman at other participating community colleges in the state but slightly lower than two-year college students nationally.

The fact that students who entered the College in the fall of 1971 tended to score lower on the ACT battery than did the students who entered a year earlier is reflected in the composite score as it is in the separate test scores. The average 1971 native freshman earned a composite score .7 of a point lower than his counterpart last year. Statewise the difference was .8 of a point. Foreign students at Montgomery scored 1.4 of a point lower this year as compared to last. If this drop in the average score is not a result of chance it may be an indication that the College is attracting a broader cross section of the County high school graduates. Since the score likely to be earned by the average high school graduate is lower than that of the average traditionally college bound high school graduate it would be natural to expect the scores of Montgomery freshmen to approach the average of the total population rather than the more select group. If the drop in average scores experienced this year is a reflection of the fact that Montgomery is attracting high school graduates who ordinarily would not attend College, then the lower scores are an indication that the College is truly serving the community. If this change is in fact a trend and reflects a shift in the nature of the student body the College faces a challenge in meeting the needs of these students.

Percent of Students with ACT Composite Scores

13

in Selected Intervals

Total College

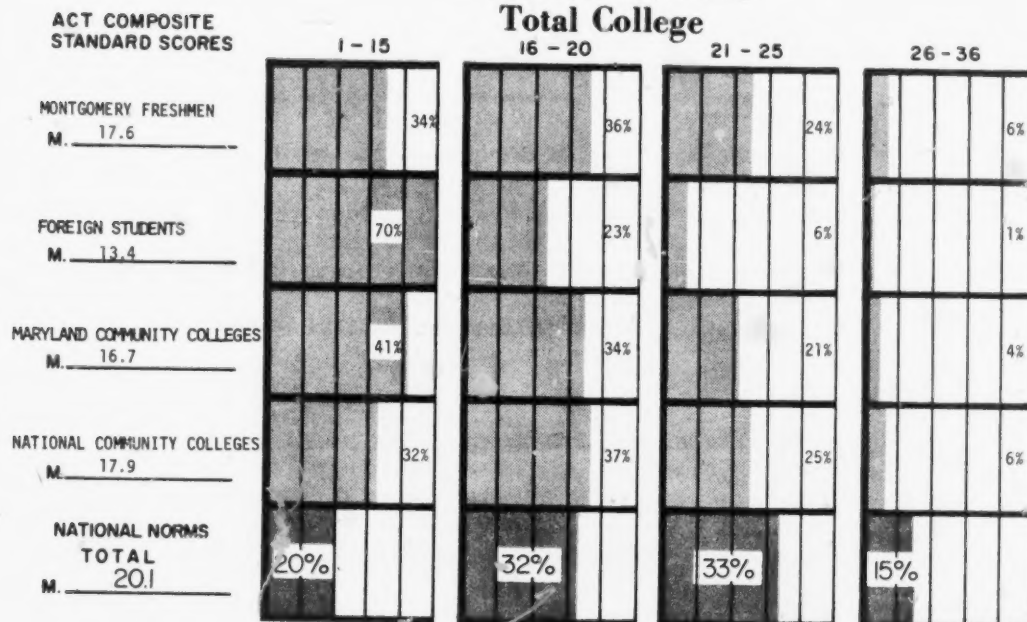


Figure 9

Selected Groups

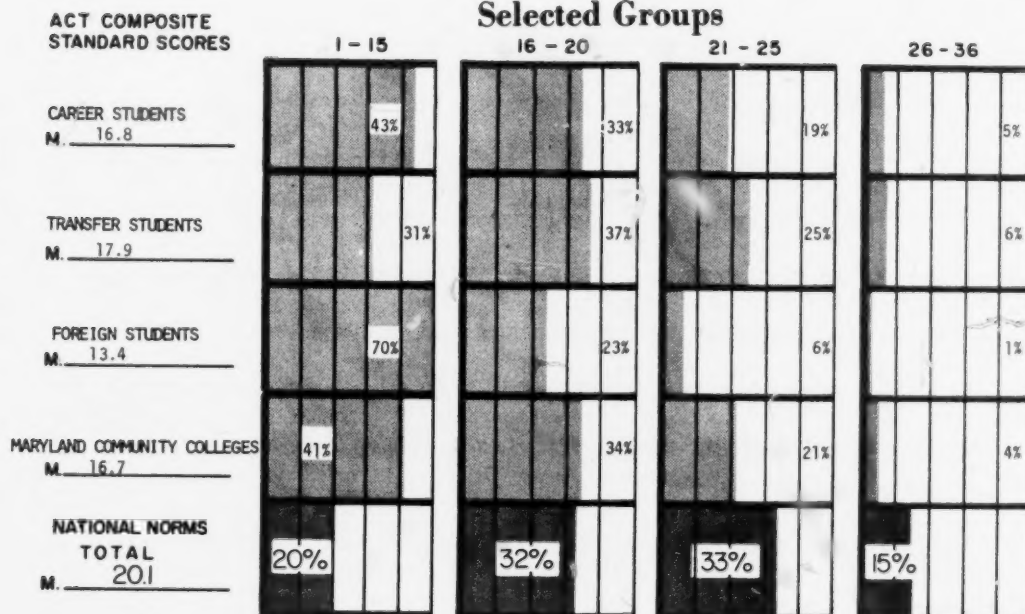


Figure 10



High School Grades

Perhaps the most reliable research finding in education is that high school grades are predictive of college grades; further, that academic aptitude tests and high school grades combined are a better predictor of college grades than either alone. This knowledge led ACT to initiate regular collection of self-reported high school grades.

In the testing session the student is asked to report his most recent grade prior to his senior year in high school in each of the four subject areas - English, mathematics, social studies, and natural sciences. These self-reports are considered estimates of his high school academic achievement, for presumably high school grades depend on both academic aptitude and personal characteristics, such as persistence and study habits.

The fact that Montgomery high school students receive lower grades in comparison to their standardized test scores than do students in other systems is well documented. Figures 11 and 12 show that while Montgomery students were consistently above their counterparts in the other community colleges of the state on ACT scores they receive lower high school grades. This situation would work as a handicap to the student seeking admission to an other than "open door" college.

Percent of Students with Average of Four High School Grades (HSA)
in Selected Intervals **Total College**

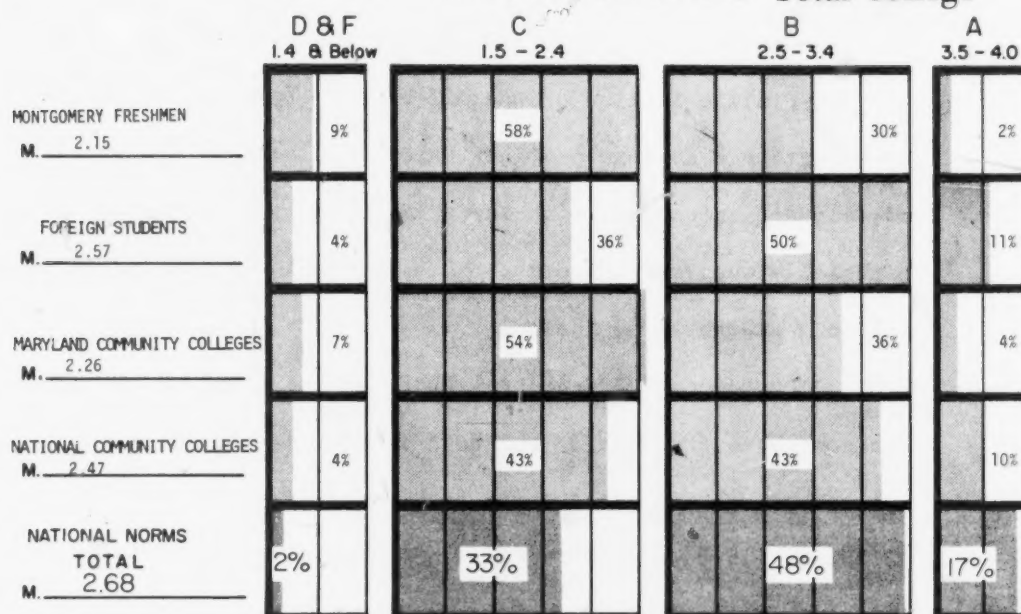


Figure 1

Selected Groups

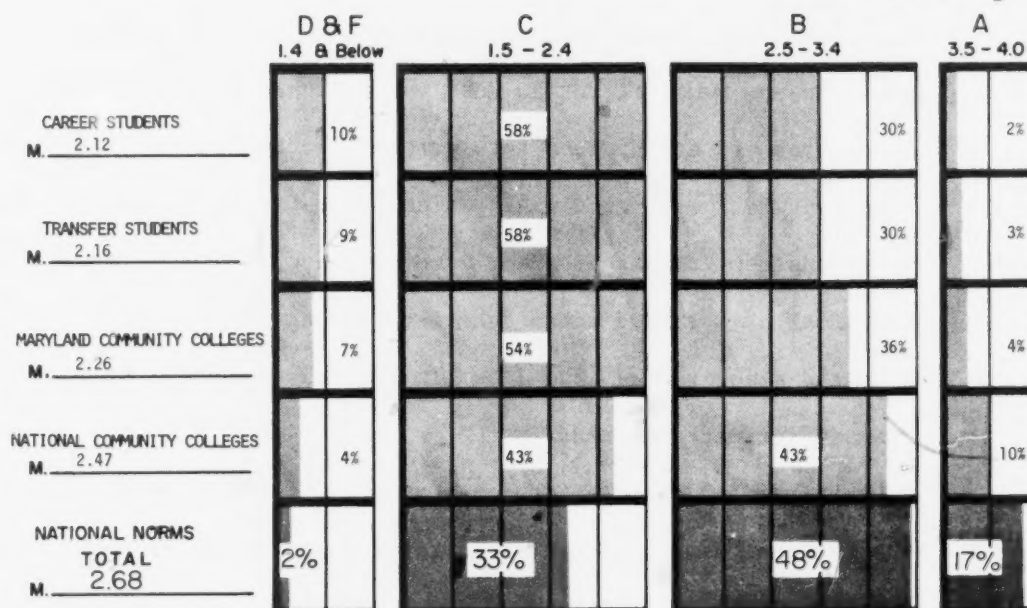


Figure 12



CHAPTER II

GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS

The chief assumption underlying the development of the Student Profile Section of the ACT battery is that the quality of education a college provides depends in part on the amount of relevant information its staff has about its students, especially when such information is available in systematic form before a student's admission.

The Proposed Educational Major of the students who entered Montgomery as freshmen in the fall of 1971 is not identical to the actual curriculum in which each matriculated; however, Figures 13 through 16 reveal the interests of the students at the time they took the ACT battery. A comparison of the proposed majors of the 2308 native Montgomery freshmen with college bound freshmen across the country (Figure 13) indicates that Montgomery students tend less toward education and science and more towards business and arts and humanities than does the national sample. When the local students are divided into career- and transfer-oriented groups according to the curriculum in which they actually matriculated, it is apparent that the career students favor business, health, and technical majors more often than does the national sample. Career-oriented students are also less likely to be undecided than is the transfer-oriented student.

Transfer-oriented students at Montgomery are very similar to the national sample in terms of proposed majors. (Figure 15) Arts and humanities are chosen more often while engineering and technical



Proposed Educational Major Total College

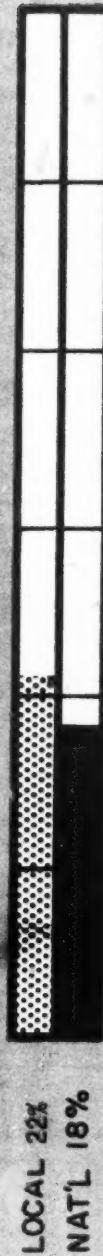
EDUCATION



SOCIAL, RELIGIOUS



BUSINESS, POLITICAL
AND PERSUASIVE



SCIENTIFIC



AGRIC. AND FORESTRY



HEALTH



ARTS AND HUMANITIES



ENGINEERING



TRADE, INDUSTRIAL
AND TECHNICAL



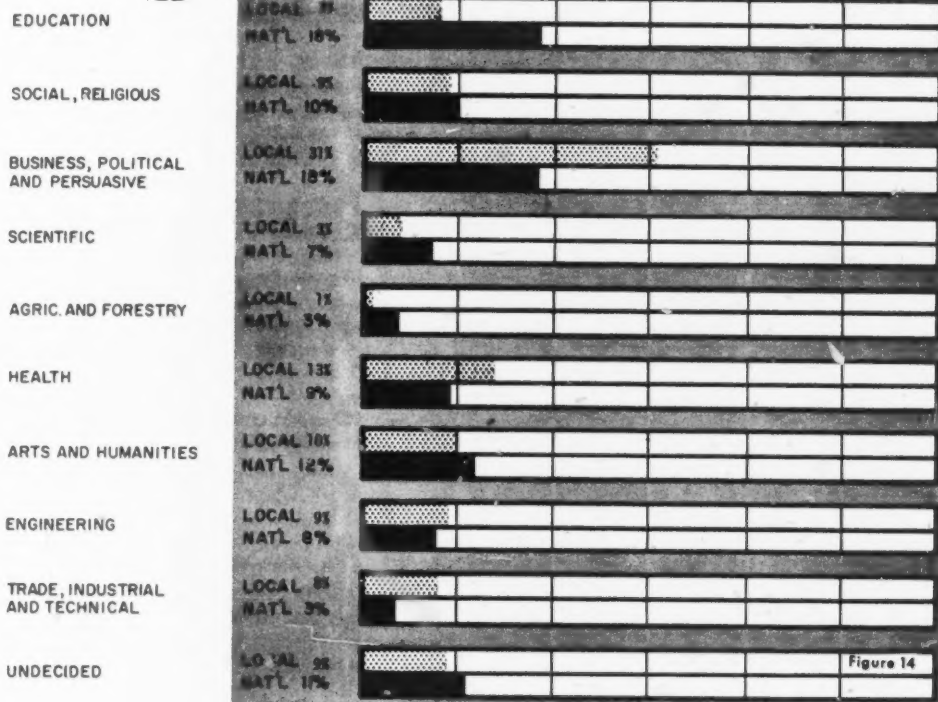
UNDECIDED



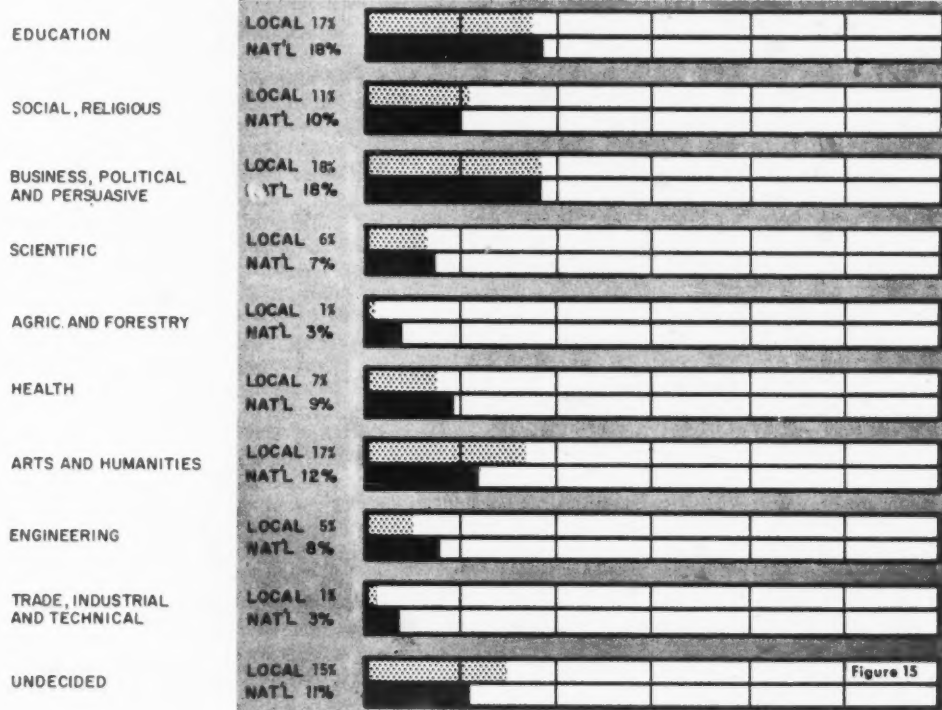
Figure 13



Proposed Educational Major Career Students 18



Proposed Educational Major Transfer Students





Proposed Educational Major Foreign Students

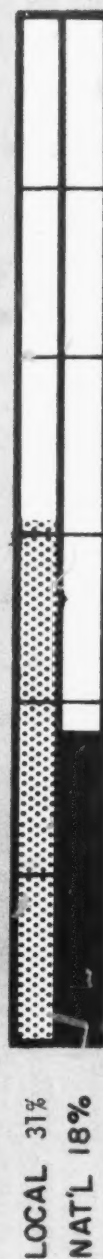
EDUCATION



SOCIAL, RELIGIOUS



BUSINESS, POLITICAL
AND PERSUASIVE



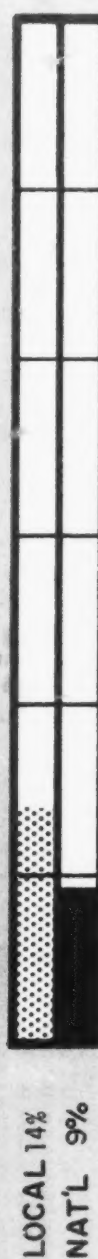
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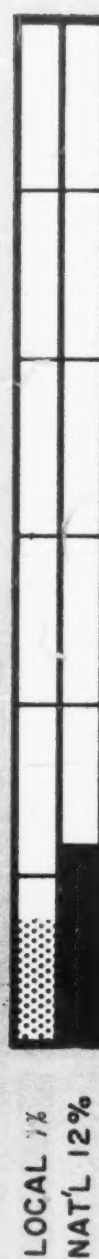
AGRIC. AND FORESTRY



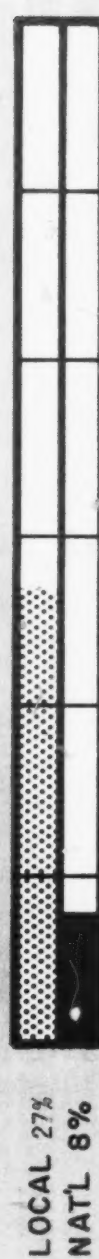
HEALTH



ARTS AND HUMANITIES



ENGINEERING



TRADE, INDUSTRIAL
AND TECHNICAL



UNDECIDED



Figure 16

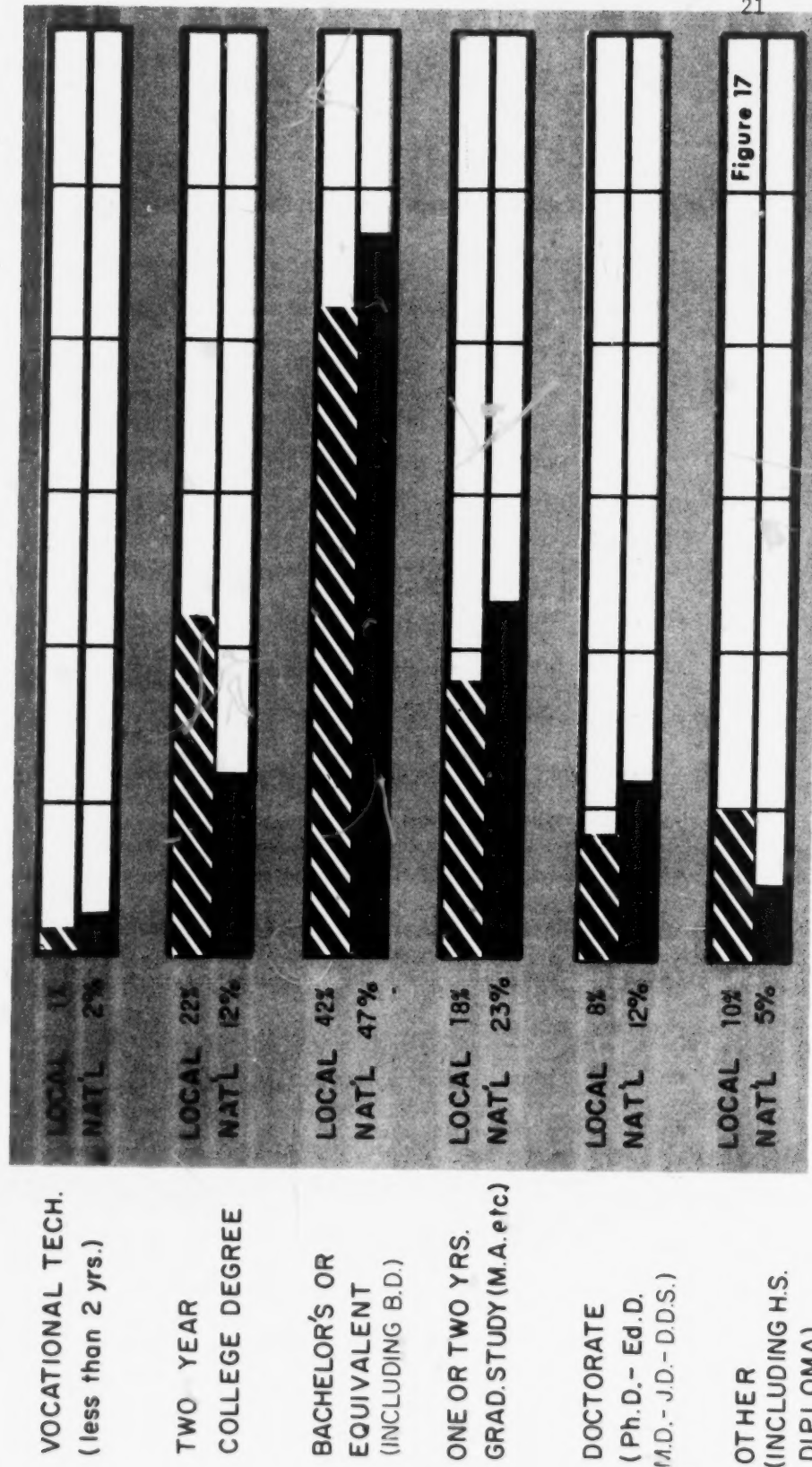
majors tend to be chosen less often by the local students. Transfer students tend to be more undecided than the average college bound student.

The proposed majors of the foreign students are presented in Figure 16 and indicate that these students are interested in business, health, and engineering and that few are undecided.

The Degree Sought by students who enter Montgomery is indicated on Figure 17. About one-fifth of the freshmen plan to terminate their formal education once they have earned an Associate Arts degree. However, almost seventy percent plan to earn a Bachelor's degree or higher. This is in keeping with the fact that a large percentage of Montgomery students transfer prior to graduation.



Educational Plans – Degree Sought Montgomery Community College Freshmen



CHAPTER III

STUDENT PERSONNEL NEEDS

The Housing Plans of community college students differ greatly from the four year college student. The majority of the freshmen live within commuting distance of the campus. Figure 18 indicates that only a small portion of freshmen would be interested in college housing as one of the benefits of attending Montgomery is that the students can live at home.

Transportation Plans - The fact that seventy-nine percent of this group of entering students indicated they plan to drive a car means over 1800 cars on campus. When one realizes that the students included in this report represent less than one fourth of the total student body the dimensions of the parking problem become apparent.

The Special Educational Needs of the entering freshmen are presented in Figure 19 and it can be seen that the Montgomery student does not differ greatly from his national counterpart in the recognition of his needs. The fact that so many entering freshmen recognize they need special assistance in these areas presents the College with a challenge. The extent to which the College allocates its resources to fill these needs reflects its sensitivity and commitment to this group of students.

Special Program Interests as indicated in Figure 20 represents the other end of the spectrum. Here forty-five percent of the students indicate they are interested in programs of independent study. While the number of such programs are increasing it

Percent of Students Expecting to have Housing or Car

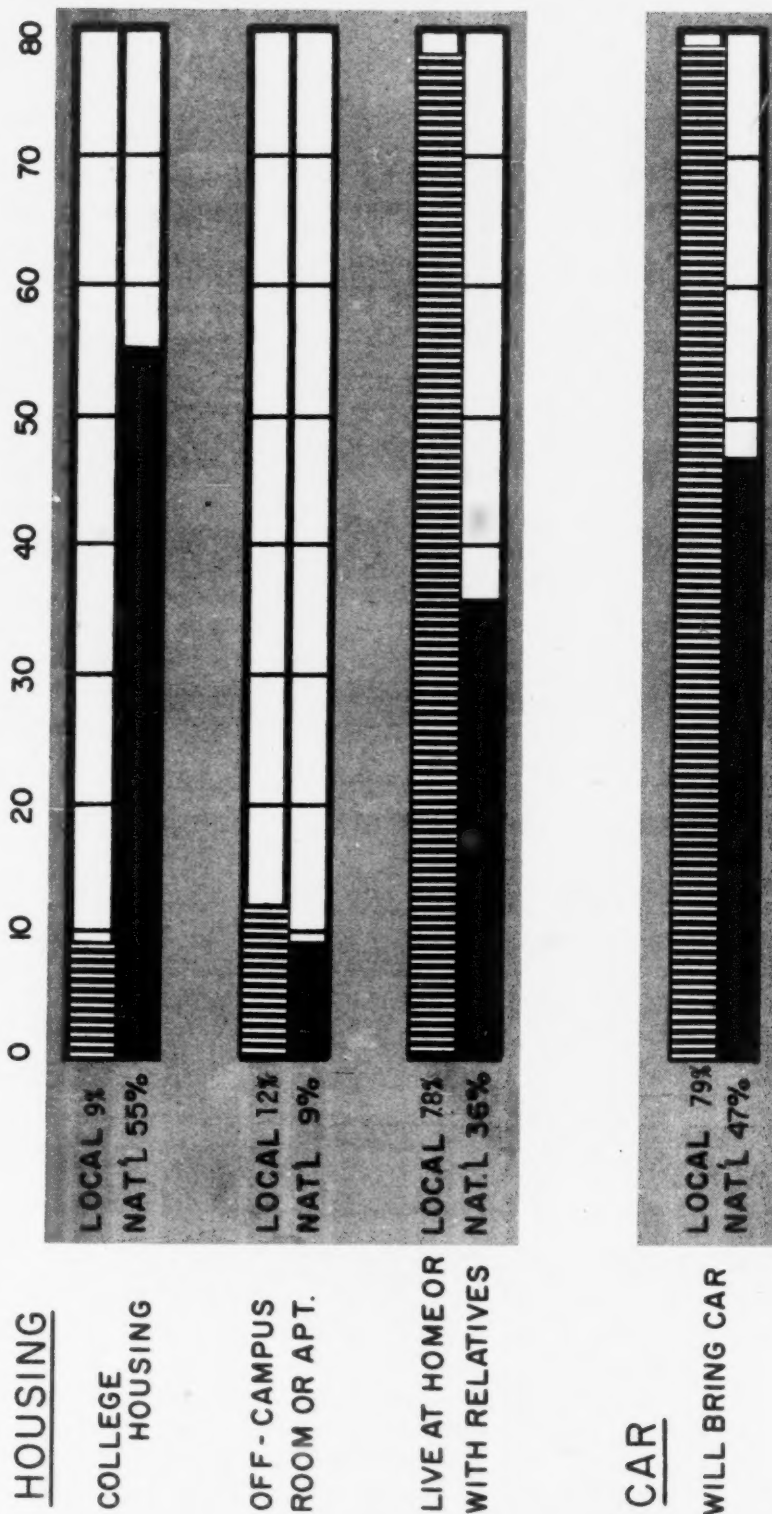
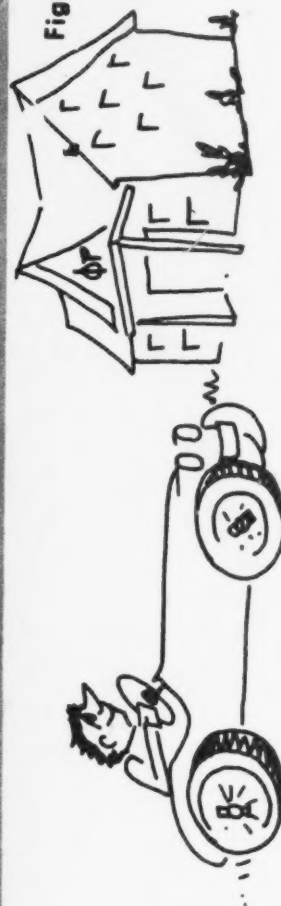


Figure 18



Percent of Students who Expressed Special Educational Needs

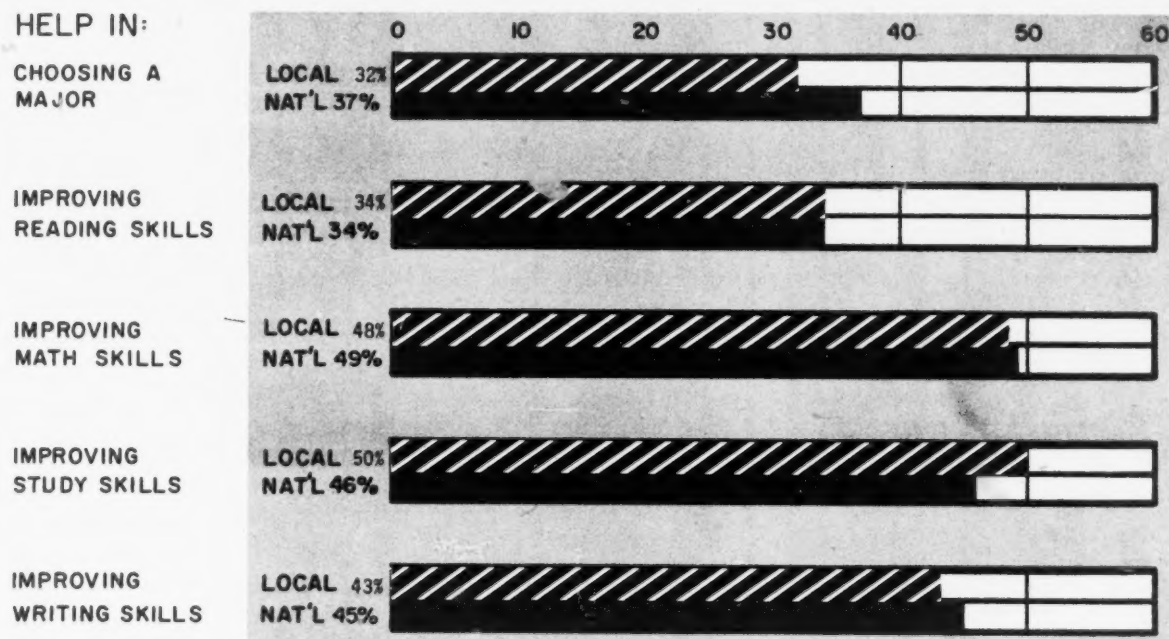


Figure 19



Percent of Students who Want to be Considered for Certain Programs

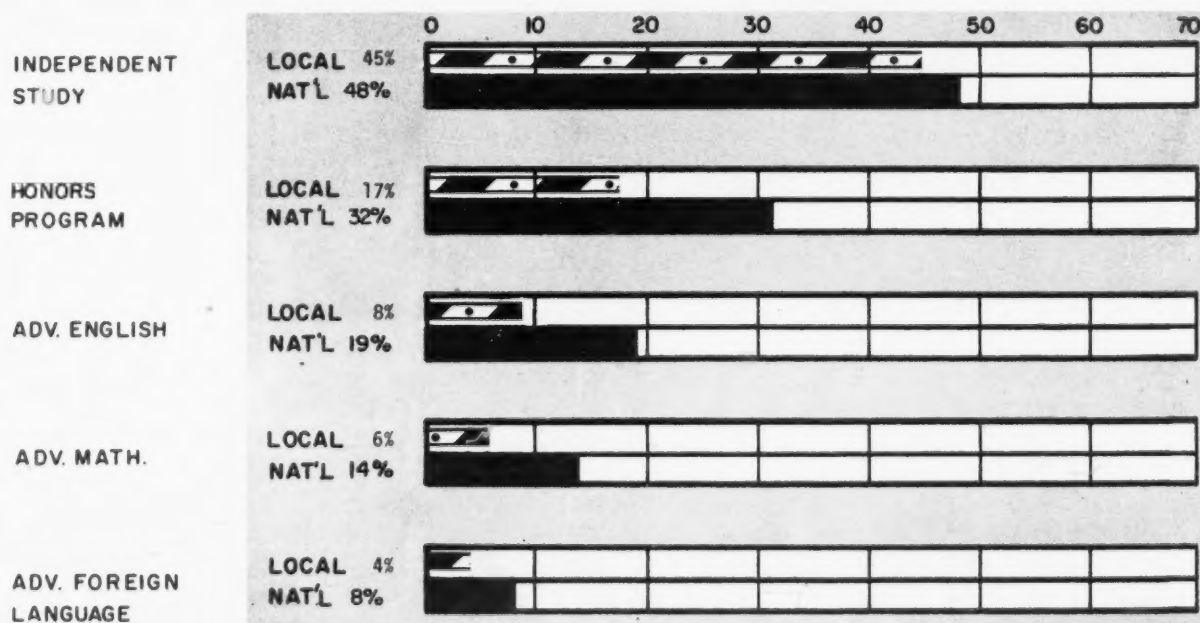


Figure 20

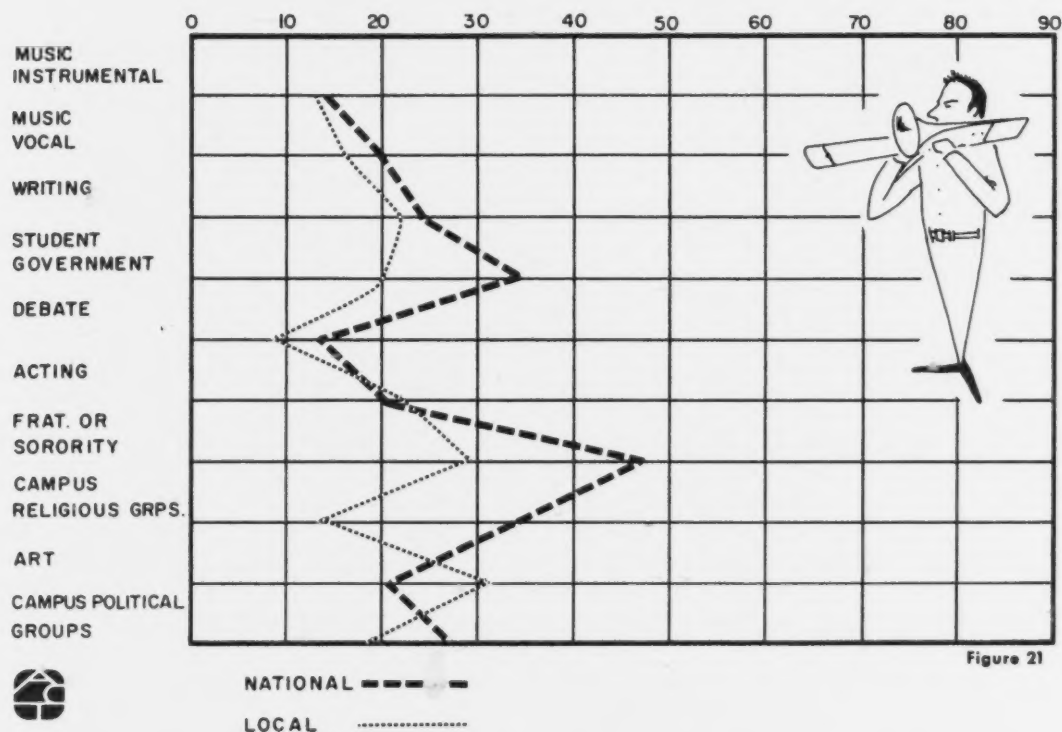
will be some time before this proportion of the student body could obtain a major portion of their credit through independent study.

It appears that a considerable number of entering freshmen would appreciate being able to participate in the honors program. Likewise, a number of freshmen feel capable of working in advanced English, mathematics, and foreign language programs. The new credit by examination system should appeal to these students.

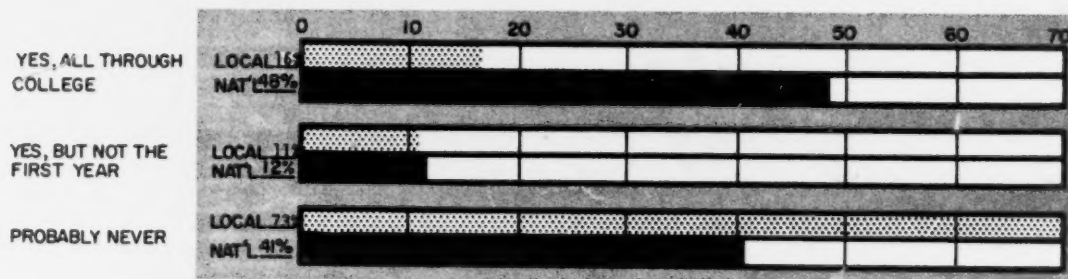
The Extracurricular Activity Plans of Montgomery students presents an interesting comparison to the national norm. The local students express much less interest in student government, debating, social, religious, and political groups than does the average college student nationally. On the other hand, the Montgomery student tends toward acting and art more often than does his national counterpart. A question can be asked regarding the participation of students in the extracurricular activities available at the College. If participation is considerably lower than is indicated by these levels of interest is there a communication problem existing?

The Financial Aid available to students is increasing; however, it will probably never match the need. Figure 22 indicates that while most students never expect to require financial assistance there is a sizeable group which is very dependent on such aid. It is obvious that living at home and attending a community college presents a different financial situation as opposed to attending a four year college away from home.

Percent of Students Responding "YES" to Certain Extracurricular Activity Plans



Percent of Students who Expect to Apply for Financial Aid to Help Meet College Expenses



Percent of Students Needing Help in Finding Employment



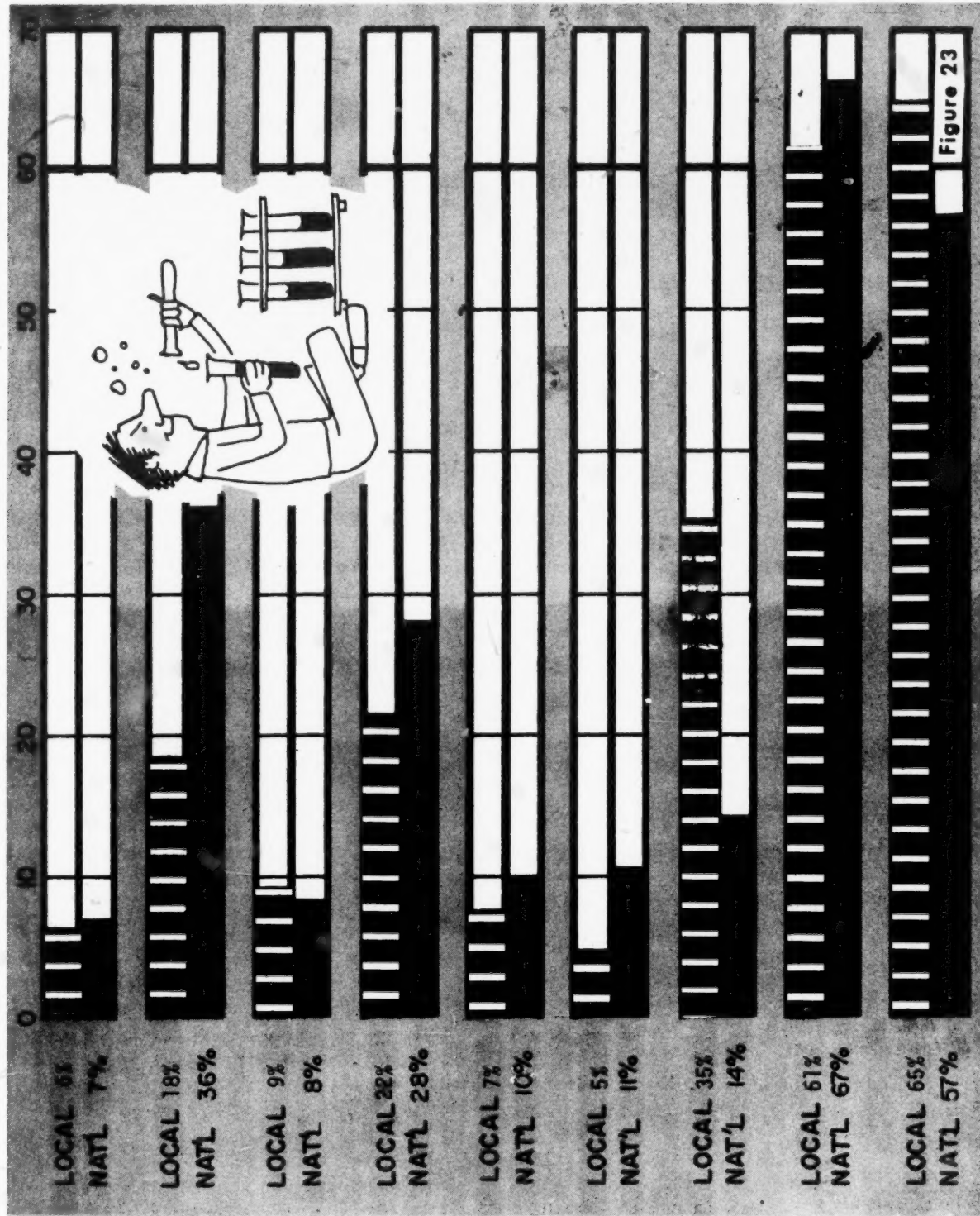
Figure 22

Finding Employment is seen as a problem for thirteen percent of the local students. It would appear that the majority of working students either expect to continue in their job after entering the College or feel they will be able to find a job on their own. (Figure 22) Each campus maintains a directory of available jobs and assists students who are seeking employment.

Out-of-Class Achievements are reported in nine different areas. When students completed the ACT Battery they indicated which of seven achievements in each area were true of them. Figure 23 gives the percent of the freshmen who indicated three or more achievements in each area. Montgomery students are more likely to have participated in athletics and work experiences than are students in the national sample. Art activities are slightly more common among local students than among students in the national sample. Activities in high school are an indication of the activities a student is likely to pursue while in college.



Percent of Students with Three or More Out-of-Class Achievements



CHAPTER IV
CHOOSING A COLLEGE

Major Influences in Selecting Montgomery

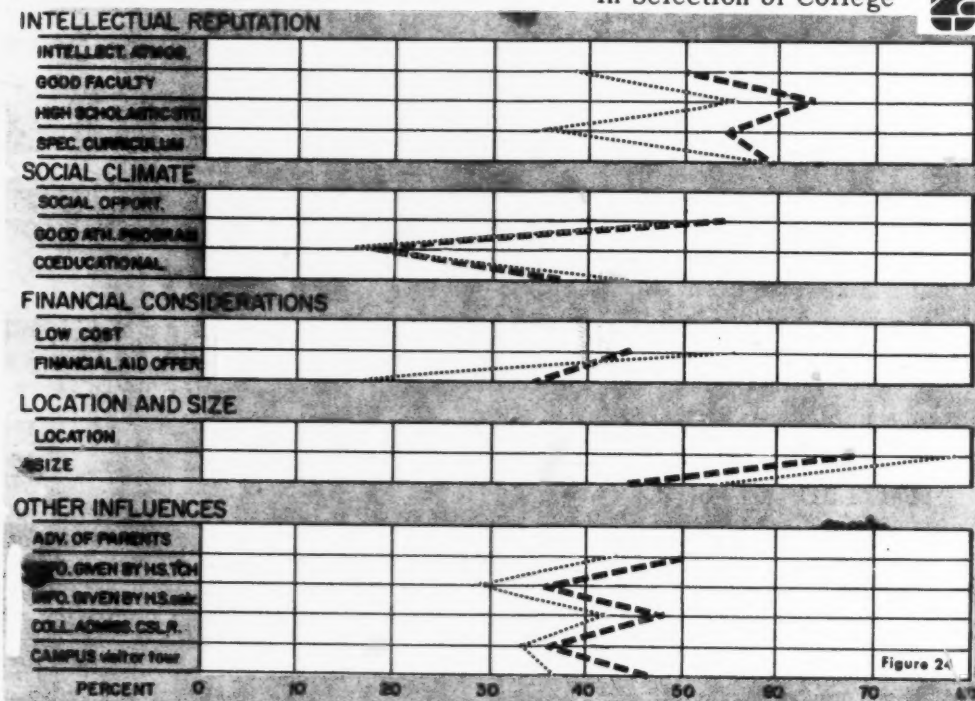
The image of the College is reflected in the reasons students give for choosing Montgomery. A review of Figures 24 and 25 indicates that students see the College as having a good faculty and the special curriculums the students want. Further, they are attracted by the low cost and location.

Most Important Factor in Making College Choice

When students are asked to indicate the single most important factor which influenced them to attend Montgomery they stated their special curriculum first and location second. It is important to notice that among the "Other Influences" listed on Figure 25, high school counselors stand out as the single most important influence for nine percent of the total group. This suggests that the College is highly dependent on high school counselors as a communication link to the high school student. It would appear that the low ratings of other items in this category may indicate fertile areas for public relations efforts.

Percent of Students Indicating these Items as Major Influences in Selection of College

NATIONAL ----- LOCAL



Single Most Important Factor in Making College Choice

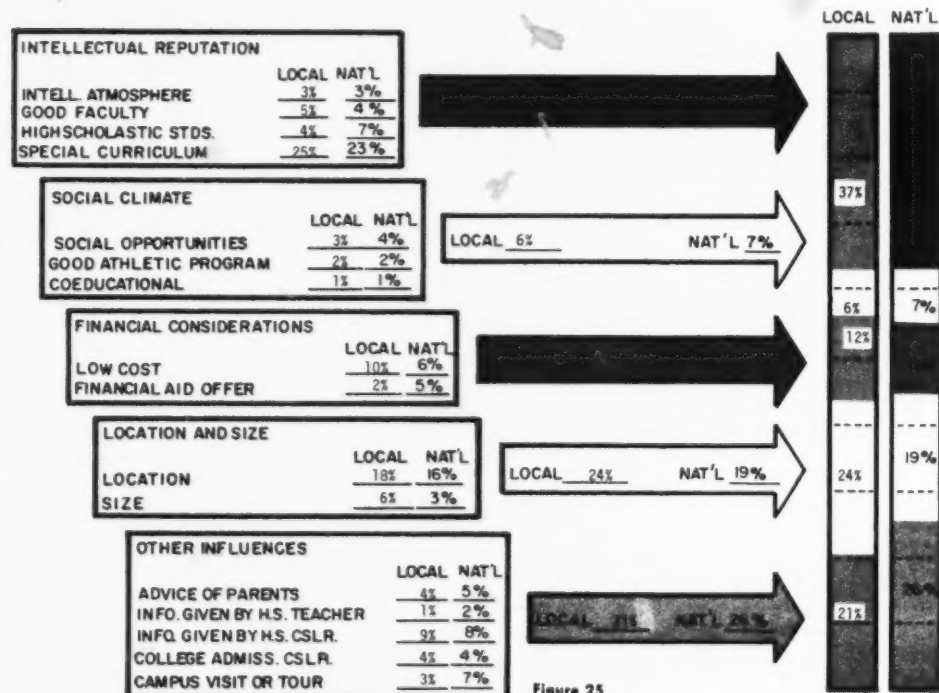


Figure 25

CHAPTER V

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The Residence at Time of Testing as indicated on the map in Figure 26 reveals that the College enrolls students from many parts of the country. The figures do not include the 270 foreign students who were admitted as freshmen. These students usually write the ACT Battery after they enter the United States and in most cases they list either Maryland or the District of Columbia as their residence.

The Size of High School Class is a reflection of the population of the County. (Figure 27) Sixty-four percent of the entering freshmen graduated in a class of 400 or more students. Figure 27 also reveals the fact that fourteen percent of the students indicated they had participated in honors courses in high school.

Family Income as indicated on Figure 28 reflects the economic level of Montgomery County. While it is obvious that the family income of the average Montgomery student is considerably higher than the national norm it should be noted that there are a considerable number of students from families with relatively low incomes. This fact is reflected in the financial aid needs of many students.

The Major Feeder High Schools in the county are listed on Figure 29. The number of students reported may not agree exactly with official enrollment figures as some students may be omitted from the ACT report.

State of Residence at Time of Testing

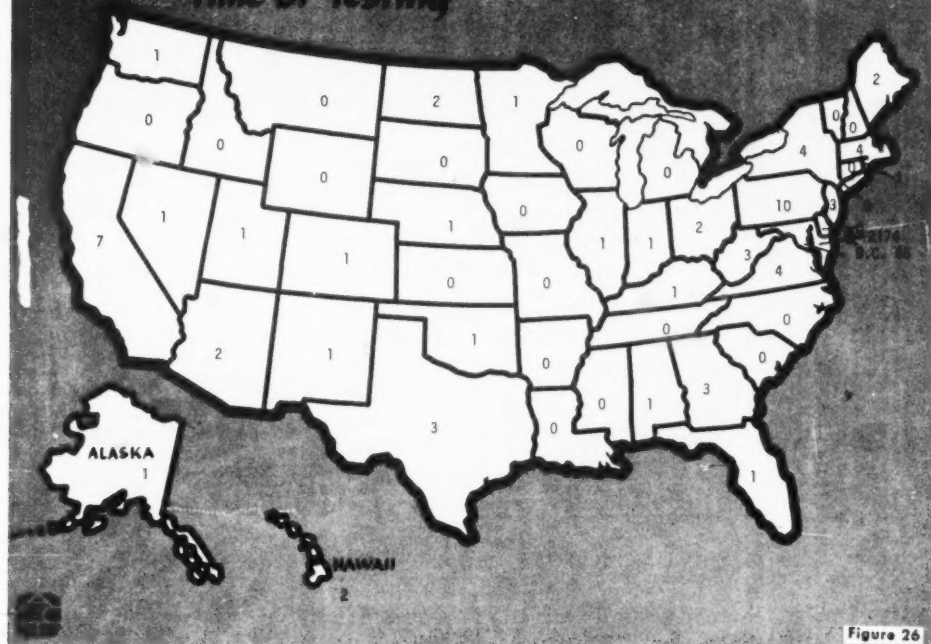


Figure 26

Size of High School Graduating Class

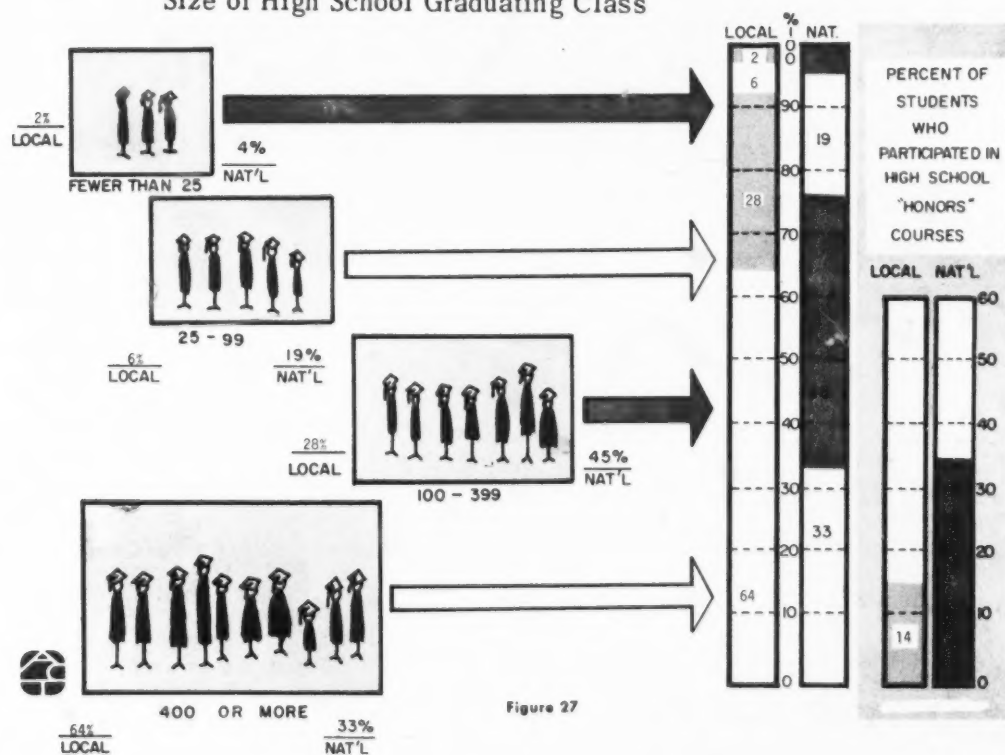
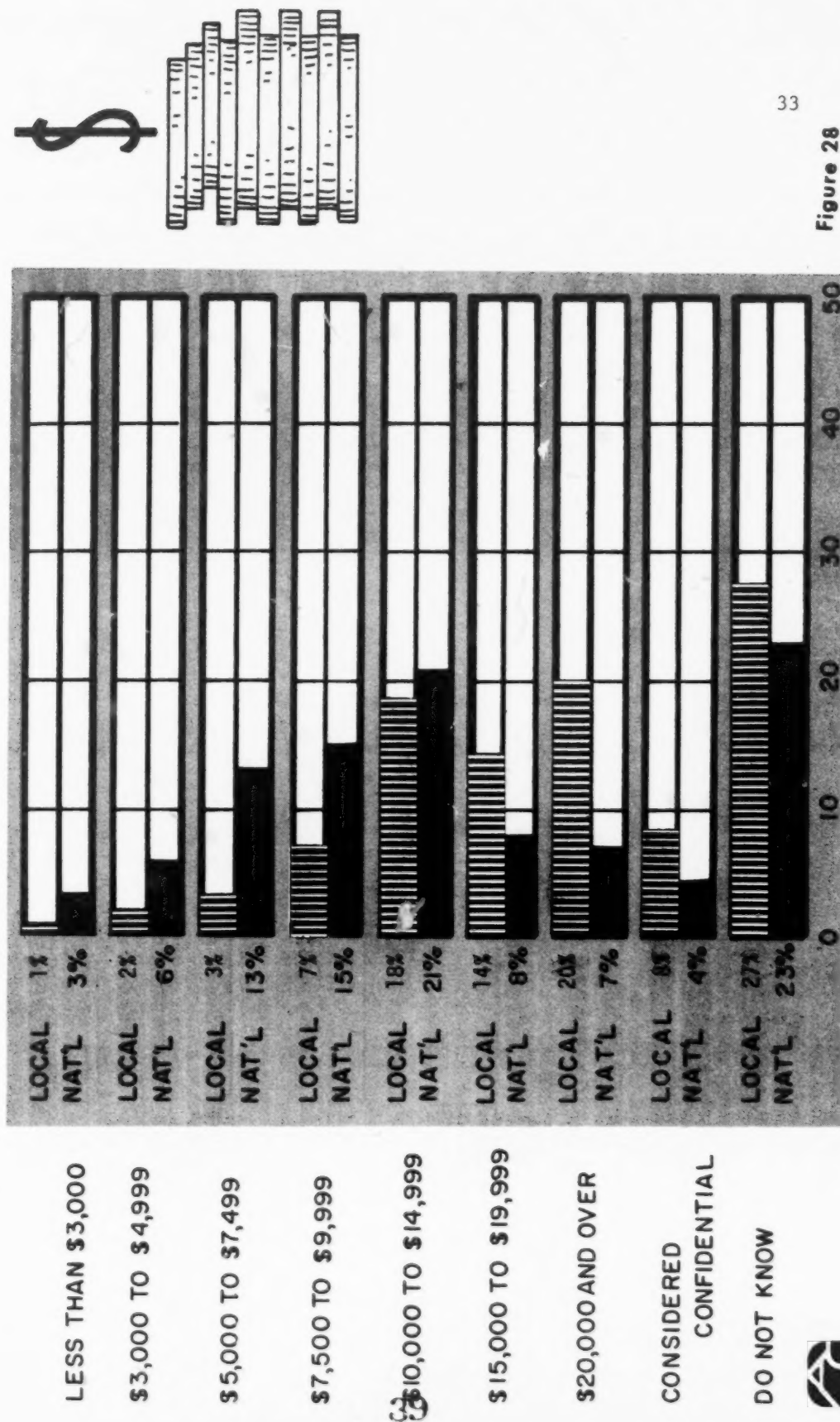


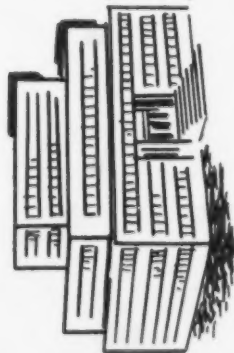
Figure 27

Students' Estimates of Family Income



Major Feeder High Schools

NAME OF HIGH SCHOOL



Peary

Wheaton

Northwood

Walter Johnson

Montgomery Blair

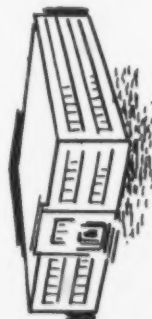
Gaithersburg

Springbrook

Einstein

Richard Montgomery

Winston Churchill



MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
65	56	144
71	49	126
54	51	121
66	46	112
55	49	104
46	54	100
60	40	100
55	38	93
52	38	90
46	28	74

Figure 29

APPENDIX

SAMPLE STUDENT PROFILE REPORT

provided by

THE AMERICAN COLLEGE TESTING PROGRAM

for students applying for admissions

TRIMBLE ANTHONY C
2040 RAVENSWOOD AVE
CENTRAL CITY, ILL 60427

392-12-1970
MALE
04/17/50

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
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FOR COLLEGE OFFICE USE

SPR '70-71

14-007-270 CENTRAL CITY H S

501 ELM ST

CENTRAL CITY

ILLINOIS

60427

1	1103	1	NATL	07/71	HS GRAD	400-UP	NO	YES	DOES NOT APPLY	3	VH	AV	AV	HI	0	VH	0	AV
---	------	---	------	-------	---------	--------	----	-----	----------------	---	----	----	----	----	---	----	---	----

2	DRAFTING	JR COL DEGR	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
---	----------	-------------	-----	-----	-----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

3	ARCH DESIGN/DRAFTING	ARCHITECTURE	YES	AT HOME	Y	NO	NO	Y	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	Y	Y
---	----------------------	--------------	-----	---------	---	----	----	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	---	---

4	SUBJECT AREA	ACT	16	26	38	NATL	18	48	57	12	10	15	LEV	14	16	22	I	15	17	26	NO
NOTE: FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION, SEE 1970-71 USING ACT ON THE CAMPUS																					

COMMENTS

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